

San Diego DX Club Bulletin



March 2014



The great team that gave many of us a new DXCC Entity, a new DXCC mode or a new band country.

Thanks Guys!

The San Diego DX Club (SDDXC) is among the best known and most highly respected DX clubs in the United States. Since it's founding in 1946, SDDXC members have been on both sides of the pile-ups with DXpeditions and a fair share have achieved "Top of the Honor Roll" status. If you're interested in chasing DX, contesting, exchanging stories or just rubbing elbows with fellow "Big Guns" or "Little Pistols", you'll feel right at home at one of our club meetings. Join us at our next meeting. Visitors are particularly welcome!

For real time DX spotting and lively conversation on a variety of subjects, join us on 144.415 MHz.

MARCH PROGRAM

This month's program will be by Arnie Shatz, N6HC, discussing his adventures on the recent DXpedition to Amsterdam Island, FT5ZM.

MARCH MEETING NOTICE:

JOIN US AT Filippi's Pizza Grotto ~ <http://goo.gl/maps/wTdBq>
9969 Mira Mesa Blvd, San Diego, CA 92131

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26 2014

A Word from the Prez	2
Vice President 's Report	3
Secretary/Treasurer Rpt	4
Editor's Ramblings	4
How's DX	5
FT5ZM DXpedition	6-9



President:

Dan Severance, N6ERD

(858) 449-8526

daniel_severance@yahoo.com

Vice President:

Wild Bill Wiederhold, WB6BFG

(760) 721-2927

wb6bfg@arrl.net

Secretary/Treasurer:

Ellen Utschig, N6UWW

(760) 721-2927

elenalaloca@cox.net

Past President:

John Barcroft, K6AM

(858) 587-8061

k6am@arrl.net

Board of Directors:

John Vissat, NA6L

CQ-NA6L@hotmail.com

Ed Felter, AI6O

(619) 668-0928

ai6o@arrl.net

Bob Grimmick, N6OX

(949) 573-1070

n6ox@yahoo.com

Ladder:

John Barcroft, K6AM

k6am@arrl.net

Webmaster:

Arnie Lewin, W7BIA

Historian:

Glenn Rattmann, K6NA

(760) 749-3936

k6na@cts.com

Bulletin Editor:

Ron Stockton, N0RR

(760) 224-7139

rjstockton@cox.net

A Word from the Prez . . .

Dan Severance, N6ERD

Greetings DXers,

I hope all have worked some great DX this month! Upcoming is the International DX Convention in Visalia which is a great place to eyeball some of the people you have worked in DXpeditions. In addition there are interesting talks on multiple subjects throughout the conference. There is a large vendor room where you can see the latest radios as well as many antenna manufacturers and other equipment needed for working DX.

I have gone a day early for the “DX University” and the “Contest University” day long courses which are great for those just getting started or those looking to pick up a few tricks they might have missed. Contest University is also held at Dayton for any who missed the sign up this time around or there is always next year! I am pretty sure that the DX University is only held at Visalia.

The websites for both are <http://www.dxuniversity.com/> and <http://www.nccc.cc/CA2014/CA2014.html> or general one at <http://www.contestuniversity.com/>. You will find a lot of great information on these sites even if you don't attend.

Regardless of whether you make it to the “universities”, I remember my first trip to Visalia a few months after getting my general/extra class licenses. Usually they have something for first timer attendees to encourage them to meet as many other hams as possible like eyeball QSO cards, etc. The best thing I remember about it was hanging out in the evening meeting experienced DXers who were all happy to give me advice and tell me about things I should or could try.

The DXconvention this year is April 4, 5th and 6th and can be found at www.dxconvention.org. This year it is run by the southern California group including San Diego for which the club will receive money which keeps our dues down. Wild Bill will be needing help manning the registration desk so please sign up for at least a 2 hour time slot sometime during the registration period. Also, if you are good at sales we need people to help sell raffle tickets as the state of California no longer allows pre-sales!

They also have a station/antenna set up if you want to get a little time working on a nice radio/antenna combination, usually a SteppIR antenna with one of the newer radios.

73, Dan, N6ERD

Greetings to all!

Here's hoping that everyone has had a chance to get on the radio with the incredible conditions that are adorning us. The high bands have been a lot of fun and there is plenty of DX out there to work. You just have to turn your radio on. The W1AW/X stations continue to draw rather huge pile ups, enough so that some of get lured into thinking that it's actually something pretty rare. Truly unbelievable! It's certainly one way to work on your WAS award on multiple bands.



This month's meeting will, once again, NOT be at the Sizzler. I hope that everyone has seen it on the club's websites. Here is the information in case you haven't seen it ~ Temporary Meeting Place:

Filippi's Pizza Grotto ~ <http://goo.gl/maps/wTdBq>
9969 Mira Mesa Blvd, San Diego, CA 92131
(858) 586-0888
Social Hour 5:00 P.M. – Dinner 5:30 P.M. –
Meeting 6:30 P.M.

I received a call from one of the Sizzler's manager's once again indicating that the remodel is going even longer than planned. So we will **NOT be meeting there in this month either**. The new planned re-opening is April 15th. Yes, that is what they said, so we'll see how that goes! Hopefully things will be back to normal next month. It appears that the project turned into a can of worms...

This month's meeting will be the World Famous Arnie Shatz, N6HC, discussing his adventures on the recent DXpedition to Amsterdam Island, FT5ZM. The SDDXC will be the first club to hear about the DXpedition, so please join us for a great evening. Arnie has been an ARRL member for more than 50 years and is member of the league's Legacy Circle and Maxim Society.

Arnie is a team member of nine major DXpeditions: K7C-Kure atoll (2005), 3B7C- St. Brandon Island (2007), TX5C- Clipperton Island (2008), K4M-Midway Island (2009), T31A- Kanton atoll, Central Kiribati (2011), T32C- Christmas Island, Eastern Kiribati (2011), NH8S-Swains Island, (2012), T33A-Banaba (2013) and

FT5ZM-Amsterdam Island (2014).

Thanks to Chip Margelli, K7JA, and his lovely YL, Janet, for making the trip down to do the presentation last month! It was good to see them and hear his talk about "New Geometries for High-Performance Beam Antennas" was informative.

We, The San Diego DX Club, are tasked with running the registration table, selling raffle tickets and staffing the prize room. Some of you signed up over the last two meetings, and it's looking like we have Friday pretty well covered. Saturday morning is another story though. Beside Ellen and I we only have four others signed up to help cover that day. The powers that are have to open up the registration desk at 0730. So we will NEED some early risers to show up! (Please!!!) It is a great way to meet/greet fellow DXer's. We also need sales-folks for the raffle tickets. We'll bring this up at the meeting again, so please toss your hat in the ring. For other news about the convention, go to this link: <http://www.dxconvention.org/news.html>

The ARRL Centennial Party: Thanks again to Glenn Rattmann, K6NA, for taking on the monumental task of coordinating this effort for all of the Southern California operators. He reports that we "SoCal participants" amassed nearly 40,000 contacts! Way to go team! He'd also like for any of the participants to send him any pictures and/or tales of their experience!

There is LOT of DX on currently, check out the Leagues DX Bulletin here: <http://www.arrl.org/w1aw-bulletins-archive/ARLD012/2014> If you're wondering what's on the contest horizon check here <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/weeklycont.php> And DXpeditions here: <http://www.ng3k.com/Misc/adxo.html>

Sure hope that everyone that made the trek to The Palms Springs Hamfest had a great time! We were tied up with fam-damilly projects and could not make it ~ Drats!

Thanks to all that have sent in their dues! If you have not had a chance to do so, please bring payment to the meeting. Please remember that the club's newsletter is only as good as the information Ron receives, so just take the time to submit any DX related stories.

73 & 88's to the pretty ones ~

Wild Bill, WB6BFG

Secretary/Treasurer Reports

Ellen, N6UWW



Secretary's Report

My apologies to Ellen if I missed it, but I checked my email twice, conducted a search of her emails to me and could not find an input this month. (Ed.)

Editor's Ramblings

My thanks to all who contributed this month. I have several inputs that will carry over to April. Between work, operating and a mini-vacation, I was pressed for time this issue, so I stuck to the highlights.

Don't forget, the meeting is still at the Pizza Grotto.

Ron, NORR



How's DX?

This page consists of historical data so members can share information or brag about their accomplishments. For real time info, monitor the club 2m spotting frequency, 144.415 MHz. For future DX info subscribe to the ARRL weekly DX bulletin and/or W3UR's newsletter.

DX worked by SDDXC members during late February and March

Station	Band	Date	Time	By	Station	Band	Date	Time	By
3C0BYP	17 SSB	7-MAR	2332	NN6R	TR8CA	12 CW	15-Mar	1419	W6YI
3C0BYP	40, 17 SSB	4, 5 Mar	Varied	W6YI	UA2F	10 CW	15-Mar	1803	N0RR
4S7DFG	10 CW	13-Mar	0237	N0RR	UK8FF	12 CW	8-Mar	0231	W6YI
4S7FRG	17 CW	11-Mar	2330	NN6R	UK8IF	10 CW	9-Mar	0303	N0RR
4S7LXG	20 CW	13-Mar	2127	NN6R	UK8OM	10 CW	8-Mar	0127	N0RR
5H3DK	15 SSB	2-Mar	2208	NN6R	UK8OM	10 CW	8-Mar	0308	W6YI
9J2T	20,17,12	3/1,7,8	2300	NN6R	UK9AA	17 CW	10-Mar	0353	W6YI
9J2T	12 SSB	6-Mar	0100	W6YI	UN3M	12,10 CW	4-Mar	1607	W6YI
9J2T	10 SSB	6-Mar	1500	W6YI	UN7GQ	10 CW	11-Mar	0256	N0RR
9X9NH	15 CW	3-Mar	0256	NN6R	UN7JX	12 CW	8-Mar	0234	W6YI
9X9NH	17 CW	5-Mar	1945	NN6R	UN7QX	10 CW	9-Mar	0320	N0RR
A71BO	12 CW	7-Mar	1525	W6YI	UN8PY	10 CW	7-Mar	0127	N0RR
A71BO	12 CW	7-Mar	1525	W6YI	UP0KEDR	10 CW	11-Mar	0308	W6YI
A92HK	10 SSB	8-Mar	1536	W6YI	UP6KEDR	15 CW	15-Mar	0215	AI6O
AP2TN	12 CW	9-Mar	1517	W6YI	UP6KEDR	10, 17 CW	10-Mar	126	W6YI
BH1FXN	15 CW	15-Mar	0159	AI6O	VK9X/K7CO	10 CW	5-Mar	0200	NN6R
CR2X	160 SSB	23-Feb	0814	W6YI	VK9X/K7CO	10 SSB	7-Mar	0200	NN6R
ER1LZ	12 CW	16-Mar	1423	W6YI	VU2BGS	10 CW	16-Mar	0110	N0RR
EX8MLE	12 CW	8-Mar	122	W6YI	VU2CDP	10 CW	9-Mar	0253	N0RR
EY8MM	10 CW	11-Mar	0126	N0RR	VU2DSI	10 SSB	4-Mar	1604	W6YI
EY8MM	12 SSB	8-Mar	0348	W6YI	VU2NXM	12 CW	4-Mar	1614	W6YI
FR4NT	10 SSB	2-Mar	1630	NN6R	VU2PAI	10 CW	16-Mar	0124	N0RR
HK0/UA4WHX	12 TTY	15-Mar	0011	AI6O	XZ1Z	10 CW	18-Mar	0225	N0RR
JD1/JG8NQJ	17 CW	16-Mar	0003	W6YI	YB9WZJ	12 TTY	15-Mar	0010	AI6O
JT1E	10 CW	12-Mar	0037	N0RR	YN5SU	15 CW	15-Mar	2357	AI6O
OD5ZZ	12 SSB	11-Mar	1430	W6YI	ZA1G	10 CW	2-Mar	1640	N0RR
RA2FF	10 CW	7-Mar	1600	W6YI	ZD7DL	10 SSB	7-Mar	1613	W6YI
SV3BYR	10 CW	4-Mar	1609	W6YI	ZS8C	10 SSB	3-Mar	1507	W6YI

QSLs Received Recently

Station	Via
UN8PY	DL8KAC
V73MW	M0URX
VU7AG	W4VKW
XW0YJY	E21EIC
XZ1J	JH1AJT

THE 2014 AMSTERDAM ISLAND DXPEDITION – a most memorable experience

On January 14, 2014 a team of 14 very experienced DXpeditioners departed Fremantle, Western Australia on the RV Braveheart for a nine day 1900 mile nautical mile passage to Amsterdam Island in the southern Indian Ocean. The team consisted of ten North Americans, one South American and three Europeans. The countries represented were the United States (New Jersey, Ohio, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, California), Canada, Martinique, Colombia, Norway, Russia and Tajikistan. We planned to activate Amsterdam Island for the first time since 1998. The island ranked in the top five of most wanted entities for DXCC. Ralph Fedor, K0IR, had spent over two years organizing this trip to make it one of the most successful DXpeditions in recent memory.

The Northern Corridor Radio Group consisting of members from Perth and the surrounding areas proved to be an invaluable resource to the project. They provided transportation from the airport, hosted two BBQs and loaned us multiple aluminum tower sections for our Yagi antennas. The crew of five plus our ship Captain, Matt Jolly, worked tirelessly to ready the boat for our journey. It quickly became clear that our team was really twenty strong as the crew was completely committed to making our endeavor a successful one. They did a lot of the heavy lifting and made sure that we were comfortable and safe for our passage. The Indian Ocean was not so thoughtful and made our journey somewhat uncomfortable for several days. We passed the time operating maritime mobile as VK6FZM, read books, did crossword and Sudoku puzzles, watched DVDs and clung tightly to our bunks during heavy seas. We came to know each other very well over those nine days.

We arrived at the island on January 23, 2014 and the following day began transferring our equipment to the island by Zodiac. The French inhabitants were extremely helpful with this task and efficiently allocated the offloaded equipment to the appropriate station sites using a fork-lift, tractor and trailer. We didn't know what to expect from the twenty resident islanders but our trepidation was quickly allayed. We saw nothing but smiles and a can-do attitude that made it clear that our team had grown again this time to forty strong. After a brief orientation, we split up into two radio teams and went to our respective work sites...either the lower Mataf site about 76 feet above sea level and a half mile from the Martin de Vivies base or the upper Antonelli site about 650 feet above sea level with a two mile hike from the base and uphill through very rough terrain. It took us a couple of days to assemble the antennas and stations, erect the antennas, establish generator power and network our computers.

At both sites we used three element monoband Yagis on 10, 12, 15, 17 and 20 meters, single element vertical antennas for 30, 40 and 80 meters and an EY8MM "special" 160 meter top loaded vertical only at the Antonelli site. The Yagis were rotated manually by the "Armstrong" method. The transceivers were Elecraft K3s driving either OM Power OM-2000 or Elecraft KPA-500 amplifiers. Several of the transceivers had auxiliary Elecraft panadapters. The interfaces were by W3YY, the band pass filters were individual ICE models in the shack and 4O3A high power models at the tower base. We used N1MM logging software and the MMTTY engine for radio teletype. There were three 6000 watt generators at each site and the Braveheart crew maintained the generators throughout the operation. Corporate sponsorship was generous and without their support this operation would have been impossible.

FT5ZM hit the airwaves on January 26, 2014 to humongous pile-ups. Those pile-ups never abated. When we closed the operation on February 12, 2014 the pile-ups were still humongous. In spite of meticulous planning, several obstacles were encountered. The terrain between Antonelli and Mataf made networking of both sites problematic. Some of the computer power supplies were RF noisy making it difficult to operate on some bands. After one week of operation, we found that our 40 and 80 meter operation from Mataf was interfering with the geomagnetic monitoring that the resident scientists were carrying out; we had to shut down 40 and 80 meter operation from Mataf. During the day, we were serenaded by the island seals and their calves who clamored for their next meal. There were thousands of seals that called Amsterdam their home. At night they came out of the ocean to nestle in the thick clumps of grass which were interspersed with large lava rocks.

They had no fear of humans and, if approached, could become very aggressive. Our French host required us to agree not to travel at dark from our operating shacks. It was dangerous at Mataf because we might find a family of seals in the brush around our towers; seal bites can be very nasty. It was dangerous at Antonelli because the two mile hike to base was over uneven and perilous terrain. The only way to abide with this constraint was to have 12 or 24 hour shifts. There were three bunk beds at each site so it was possible to catch a quick nap if one was necessary. Small “kitchens” were set up at each site so a meal could be enjoyed if anyone needed a snack or drink.

We were treated royally at Martin de Vivies base. We were housed in a dormitory with two to a room. We had flush toilets, warm showers and comfortable bunk beds. We had use of the local laundry facilities and internet, although our connection rate was painfully slow and we had to use French keyboards! The biggest surprise was the gourmet food that we enjoyed. Breakfast was from 6:30 AM to 9:00 AM and was continental with a choice of fruit, fruit juices, hot chocolate, coffee or tea, cold cereal and warm baguettes with butter, margarine or jam. Lunch and dinner were a different matter altogether. We were treated to fresh fish, lobster, sausage, beef or chicken, salads, vegetables, rice, French fries (frites), pasta and delicious sauces to dress up the already yummy feast. Dessert consisted of various choices of cheeses, cakes and pastries and even ice cream sundaes with chocolate and whipped cream toppings. With each meal there was a choice of beverage which included French wine. No one suffered malnutrition on Amsterdam Island! There was also a small bar which served soft drinks, beer, wine and various liquors. No one suffered from thirst on Amsterdam Island, either! It was not unusual for the team to give Francis, the chef, a round of applause in appreciation of his delicious creations.

Our radio team was integrated into the French team at the Skua restaurant. We each performed at least once as “petit Marie” helping “grande Marie” clean the restaurant floor once daily and set and bus the tables for lunch and dinner.

The eight K3 transceivers hummed for seventeen days churning out 170,000 QSOs. The breakdown by continent was 50% Europe, 25% North America, 22% Asia, and 3% Africa/South America and Oceania. The statistics by mode were 95,000 CW, 63,000 SSB and 12,000 RTTY. Our most productive bands were 10 meters (30,834), followed closely by 15 meters (28,237) and 20 meters (27,816). We worked DXCC on every band except 80 meters (96) and 160 meters (85). There were over 36,000 unique calls in the log.

Unfortunately, we had to cease operation one day earlier than scheduled due to an approaching unfavorable weather front causing rough surf. Heavy seas would make it impossible to load the RV Braveheart. With a heavy heart, we departed the island and waved goodbye to our friends at the pier. The nine day transit back to Fremantle blessed us with six days of calm weather and only three more days of tossing and rolling. We were all glad to finally place our feet on solid ground on February 22. With our sea legs still under us and the ground “moving,” we were graciously treated to another BBQ by the Northern Corridor Radio Group at their club station. The following evening our radio team started leaving the continent down under.

We will fondly remember the generosity of our Australian hosts, the graciousness of our French hosts and the comradeship of the Braveheart crew. We gratefully thank our support team who helped at every step of the DXpedition. Lastly, we will never forget our radio team mates and what we accomplished together on this DXpedition. We hope you made it into the log and that you enjoyed our adventure as much as we did.
DXpedition web site: <http://www.amsterdamdxdx.org>

Copyright © 2014 by Arnold Shatz



Mataf Operating Site



Antonelli Operating Site



Antonelli Shack



Arnie, N6HC, at Antonelli